

EXHIBIT 44

NewsRoom

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US seeks Indian nod for Boeing deal

S. Rajagopalan

US Congressmen have begun to exert gentle pressure on the Government of India to support Air-India's desire to acquire Boeing aircraft; in order to expand its fleet, a move that has been pending since last January.

Fortyfive Congressmen, many of them India Caucus members who take a strong pro-India position on various issues on Capitol Hill, have written to Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee urging an early decision.

The projected \$4 billion sale, it is said, will create as many as 42,000 American jobs at a time of acute concern here over loss of jobs because of the continuing economic downturn and outsourcing by US firms.

The Seattle-based Boeing had in January submitted a proposal to sell ten 777-200ER aircraft with the option of seven more. The Congressmen, citing reports, said the offer was favourably received by the Air-India board's technical committee;.

However, with no decision emerging, the company submitted another proposal in May to sell 12 Boeing 737 aircraft with the option of six more.

I am concerned that there has been no movement by the Government of India or the Air-India board to authorise the Boeing sale. I am urging Prime Minister Vajpayee to authorise the sale as soon as possible; Congressman Joseph Crowley, the current Democratic co-chair of the India Caucus, said.

His immediate predecessor Jim McDermott said: This sale would provide the struggling (US) economy with a shot in the arm when it needs it most. The jobs it would create would largely occur in the manufacturing sector, the sector of the economy that has been hit the hardest under the downturn of the past few years.

In their letter to the prime minister, the lawmakers projected the sale as an index of the growing Indo-US commercial relations.

A successful contract with Air-India will not only provide India's flag carrier with the finest aviation products available, but will also help ease US unemployment concerns; they said.

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